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Murfreesboro, TN 37130

Dr. Jane Henney
U.S. Food and Drug Administration
5630 Fishers Lane, Room 1061
Rockville, MD 20852

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March 6, 2000

Dear Dr. Henney:

I urge you to co-sponsor H.R. 3266: The Preservation of Essential Antibiotics for Human Disease Act of 1999, a bill that will help ensure that antibiotics remain effective in treating life-threatening diseases.

About one-third of the antibiotics used in the U.S. are added to livestock feed to promote rapid growth. Routinely exposing bacteria to antibiotics allows naturally drug-resistant bacteria to survive, reproduce and spread. Consumers may be exposed to drug-resistant Salmonella, E. coli, Campylobacter and other potentially deadly bacteria through the consumption of contaminated food or untreated water. Consumers may be exposed to these bacteria during food preparation and consumption. If serious food borne-illnesses occur, the antibiotics we rely on for treatment may not be effective if the bacteria have become resistant.

The potential danger is growing fast. In a 1997 study from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, more than one-third of the reported cases of a particular type of Salmonella that causes food poisoning were caused by Salmonella bacteria resistant to five important antibiotics used to treat the disease. The percentage of resistant bacteria was negligible when this type of Salmonella was studied in 1980. Drug resistance in Campylobacter bacteria, the most common known cause of bacterial food-borne illness in the U.S., increased from zero in 1991 to 20 percent in 1999.

H.R. 3266 would give the FDA more effective authority for dealing with this problem by requiring drug manufacturers to demonstrate that administering subtherapeutic antibiotics to livestock is not causing harm to humans. If they cannot demonstrate this, the FDA would end approval of the drug use.

Significant scientific evidence shows that the development of antibiotic-resistant bacteria is a serious human health threat. Let's take action to stop this unnecessary use of antibiotics. Please co-sponsor H.R. 3266. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

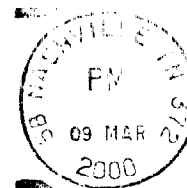


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